



The President's Daily Brief

~~Top Secret~~ 10 January 1969



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THE PRESIDENT'S
DAILY BRIEF
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1. France

De Gaulle's failure to consult his cabinet before slapping the "total embargo" on arms and spare parts to Israel is not likely to cause him any trouble that he cannot handle.

As far as we can tell, nobody in the cabinet was informed ahead of time, maybe because a number of ministers strongly oppose the idea.

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2. Jarring Mission

Now that he has had a chance to digest the new Soviet timetable for Arab-Israeli negotiations, Ambassador Jarring plans to meet in Zurich with the Israeli foreign minister on 14 January.

Jarring will not visit the Middle East until the end of the month or even later. Presumably he wants a better reading of how the powers involved feel about the Soviet proposal.

The Soviets, meanwhile, are being coy about explaining the imprecise details of their proposal. At least for now, Moscow apparently prefers Jarring and the other interested parties to take it from here.

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3. Warsaw Pact - CEMA

The Rumanians are expected to come under heavy Soviet pressure at a Warsaw Pact summit meeting to be held in the Polish capital later this month. One of the agenda items probably will be discussion of plans for a pact exercise in Rumania this year.

The signs are that the pact's leaders will at the same time put on their economic hats and convene the Council for Economic Mutual Assistance (CEMA) to press Rumania to de-emphasize national development in favor of "united action."

4. Egypt

President Nasir is "profoundly satisfied" with the medical treatment prescribed for his seriously injured brother by two US Navy doctors who rushed to Egypt on 8 January from Bethesda. Nasir was injured in a bad automobile accident last week. The Egyptian medical team treating him was greatly impressed with the consulting Americans, calling them the "best doctors they had ever met."

5. Communist China

New contests for political power are springing up in China's vast provinces, and these could force a delay in holding the party congress which early this spring was to have been the scene of a try for national reconciliation. The apparent resolution of political infighting late last year may have been more hope than reality.

6. South Vietnam

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7. Portugal-Rhodesia

Portugal's efforts to stamp out rebels in Mozambique have been bolstered over the past two months by tactical air support from Rhodesia. The Portuguese are also getting help from Rhodesian ground troops, although we do not know what kind or how much. In the past the Rhodesians have conducted joint border sweeps with the Portuguese, but this newest involvement is the deepest yet.

8. Soviet Union

Early this morning the Soviets launched their second Venus probe this year. It was sent off only five days after the first one, which is on course.

9. Panama

Another step in the junta's "revolutionary" reform program seems to have been taken with the resignation on 8 January of five of the eight civilian cabinet members.

Their replacements probably are pliable, but are not believed to have ties to the country's traditional elite, although our information on this is still sketchy. If the colonels now in control are breaking with the old oligarchy, their next move will probably be to create an independent power base.

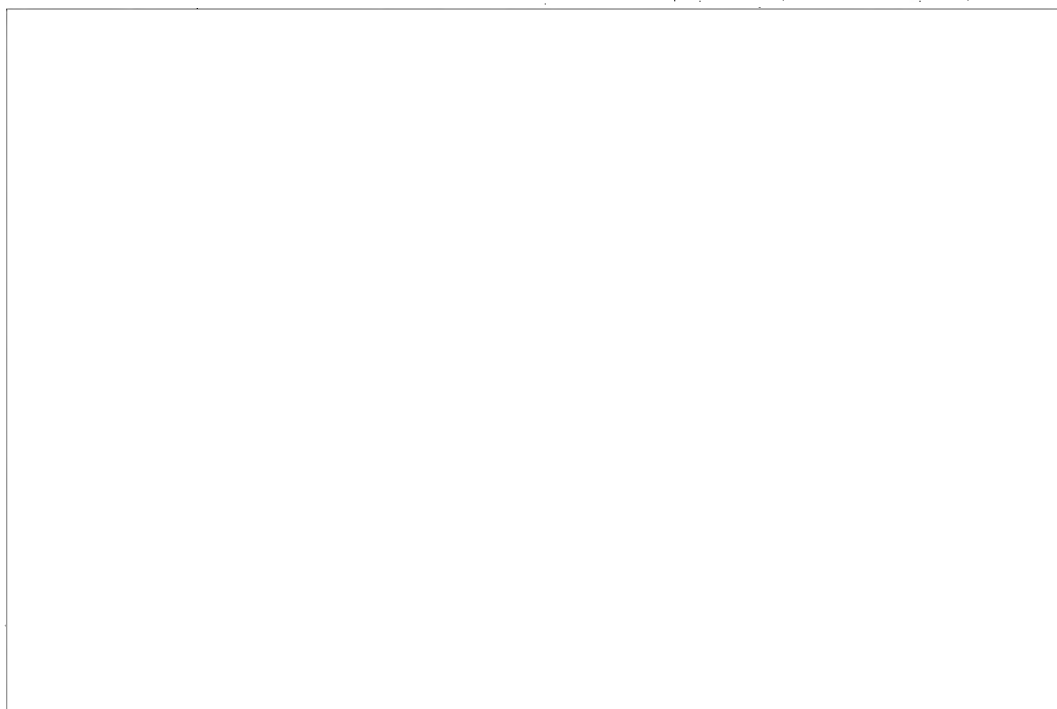
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Yesterday passed without student demonstrations marking the anniversary of the anti-US riots in 1964. The commemorative ceremonies will last for four days, however, and there still could be an antijunta manifestation.

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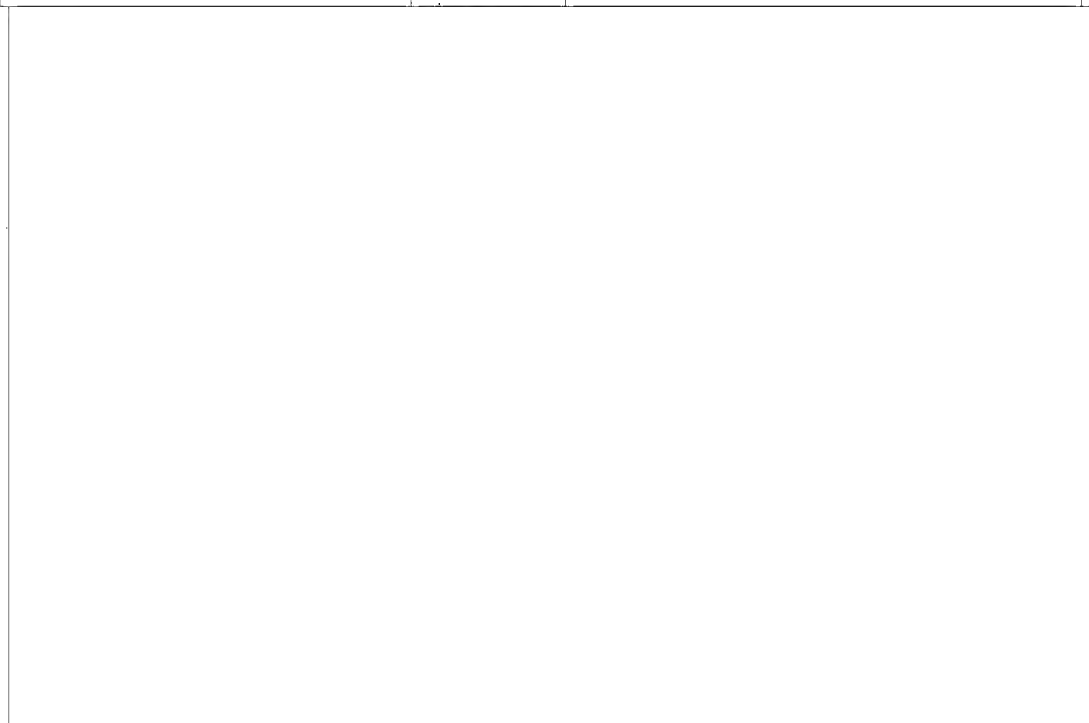


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Vietnam

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FOR THE PRESIDENT'S EYES ONLY

- 1.) Special Daily Report on North Vietnam
- 2.) North Vietnamese Reflections of US
Political Attitudes



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Special Daily Report on North Vietnam
for the President's Eyes Only

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I. NOTES ON THE SITUATION

Infiltration Continues: Hanoi is maintaining a high rate of infiltration into South Vietnam. New battalion-size groups have been detected at a rate of roughly one a day so far this month. This was the level for most of December until a surge toward the end of the month, when the total number of south-bound troops reached well over 30,000. Most of the new groups seem to be headed for the northern provinces of South Vietnam or those around Saigon.

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At least a portion of the commo-liaison network serving infiltrators moving southward in North Vietnam was overhauled in late November. One of the reasons for streamlining the system is that infiltrators are now traveling much farther within the sanctuary of North Vietnam before crossing over to the infiltration routes in Laos, where they must still undergo the rigors of US air attacks. Moreover, they are using truck and train transport much more extensively than before the November bombing halt.

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Front Hits US "Delay" Again: Liberation Radio on January 8 issued another propaganda blast in Vietnamese blaming the US for delaying the opening of peace talks. The criticism was coupled with a warning

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that delay would not improve the allied military position in South Vietnam. Washington cannot face the truth either at the peace table or on the battlefield, claimed the broadcast. It went on to boast that the Communists hold the initiative on the battlefield and are threatening the allied position even in their "last and well fortified Saigon lair."

The Communists also discussed the assassination of Saigon's education minister in a broadcast of 8 January. Although the main thrust of the broadcast was to direct the finger of suspicion away from the Communists and play up the murder as part of the internal intriguing of the Saigon government, the Communists could not resist the opportunity to boast that they too were able to pull off such murders if they wanted to. Using a familiar Viet Cong technique of taking credit for antigovernment action whether responsible or not, the broadcast claimed that anyone who "stubbornly clung to the Americans" was likely to meet an untimely death--at the hands of either "the people," his political rivals, or the US itself.

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Seaborne Trade in 1968: Seaborne imports into North Vietnam during 1968 increased by almost 40 percent compared with 1967. The increase was largely accounted for by a rise in the shipment of foodstuffs (mainly flour and rice) and petroleum from the Soviet Union and China.

The Soviets continued to be the source of the largest share of North Vietnamese imports, accounting for about 43 percent of the total.

electric power and mining equipment, machine tools, excavators, metal, railway construction equipment and rolling stock as items which North Vietnam has been receiving from the Soviet Union.

North Vietnamese exports in 1968 were 21 percent higher than in 1967. The traditional exports of pig iron and cement were not shipped abroad last year, and miscellaneous and general cargo declined, but coal

exports increased by 45 percent. The growth in coal exports probably stemmed from the repair of coal handling facilities and improvements in mine management.

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In the past, representatives of Communist countries have complained that the Vietnamese were wasting much of their aid goods, such as flour. Recently there have been many complaints in the North Vietnamese press of waste and inefficiency in the use of both materials and manpower.

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II. NORTH VIETNAMESE REFLECTIONS OF US POLITICAL ATTITUDES ON THE WAR

Wire Service Notes California Rally: The new Liberation Front wire service designed to reach press services as far away as Europe is being used to publicize not only Viet Cong successes in Vietnam but also the international support the Communists are receiving. One of the transmissions on this service on 8 January played up a rally held in San Francisco to celebrate the anniversary of the Front's founding.

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